

Tremendous World Catastrophe to Happen on Dec. 17?

Professor Porta Insists That the Peculiar Grouping of the Planets Next Month Will Produce a Gigantic Sun Spot Which Will Explode

the Earth's Volcanoes, Shake Us with Earthquakes and Bury Us with Floods, but the Government Scientists Explain Why All This Is Not Likely to Happen

ON December 17 an unusual grouping of planets occurs in the heavens. On this much all astronomers agree—that there will be an unusual and over-balanced collection of powerful planetary bodies grouped on one side of the sun.

Professor Albert F. Porta asserts with great conviction that this unusual planetary situation will pull forth from the sun the mightiest sun-spot or explosion of gases ever known to man, and that our unfortunate planet, the earth, as an innocent bystander, will receive the full force of this solar cataclysm. Staggering under this blow, Professor Porta predicts a disturbance on the earth without precedent or parallel, with hurricanes, lightning, colossal rains, gigantic lava eruptions, great earthquakes, floods, and fearful cold.

Professor Porta's predictions have attracted a good deal of attention and have brought many anxious inquiries to the Government astronomers in Washington and to the scientists in various State and college observatories. While all astronomers agree with Professor Porta as to the unusual planetary situation in the heavens next month, they do not admit that the consequences will be as he predicts. On this page Isabel M. Lewis, of the staff of the U. S. Naval Observatory at Washington, discusses Professor Porta's assertions.

Professor Porta's Distressing Prediction

OWING to a strange grouping of six mighty planets such as has not been seen a score of centuries, the United States next December will be swept by the most terrific weather cataclysm experienced since human history began.

It will be caused by the hugest sun-spot on record—a sun-spot that will be visible to the naked eye.

Since men first began to make record of events, no sun-spot has been large enough to be seen without the aid of instruments. This one will be.

The sun-spot that will appear December 17, 1919, will be a vast wound in the side of the sun.

It will be a gigantic explosion of flaming gases, leaping hundreds of thousands of miles out into space. It will have a crater large enough to engulf the earth, much as Vesuvius might engulf a football.

Such a sun-spot will be rich enough in electro-magnetic energy to fling the atmosphere of our planet into a disturbance without precedence or parallel.

There will be hurricanes, lightning, colossal rains. It will be weeks before the earth will regain its normal conditions.

There will also be gigantic lava eruptions, great earthquakes, to say nothing of floods and fearful cold.

I make this startling prophecy with no desire to be merely sensational or alarming. It is simply because my study of the planets has revealed certain results with mathematical certainty.

On December 17, 1919—no less than seven planets will pull jointly on the sun. These will include all the mightiest planets, those with the most powerful pull.

Six of them—Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune—will be in conjunction; grouped together in the greatest "league of planets" ever known in the annals of astronomy.

They will be massed in the narrow limit of 26 degrees on the same side of the sun!

Directly opposite, coming into opposition with this gigantic league will be the huge planet Uranus. The magnetic currents between Uranus and the six planets will pierce the sun like a mighty spear.

Our earth is outside the league, at an angle of nearly

By Isabel M. Lewis
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THE sensational prediction that an enormous sun-spot, plainly visible to the naked eye, is to appear on December 17, and that it will be attended by the most terrific weather cataclysm since human history began, has been circulated so generally throughout the country and has aroused such an unusual degree of apprehension in some quarters that many observatories and editors of astronomical publications in the United States have been receiving numerous inquiries as to whether there is any scientific basis for this prediction.

The foundation for this belief is supposed to be the fact that on this date six of the planets—Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune—will be grouped on the same side of the sun "within the narrow limit of 26 degrees," while a seventh, Uranus, will be diametrically opposite to this combination on the other side of the sun.

The earth is at right angles to this grouping of planets and so placed, it is said, "in perfect position to receive almost the full force of the monster electrical disturbance," to quote the words of the predictor.

The statement is also made that "two planets united are enough to produce a small sun-spot and a small storm, while three cause a larger one, and four make a very great storm, indeed."

It is true that on December 17 the rela-

tive positions of the planets will be as stated above, as may be seen from the diagram which gives the relative positions of the planets throughout the year 1919.

However, it is possible to show that four or even five or six planets may be within a narrow zone on either side of the sun without producing unusual disturbances on the earth. In fact, such groupings of the planets have already taken place several times during the present year, with no abnormal results.

We find from the diagram that the planetary groupings of December 17 will be very similar to what they were during the latter part of May of this year. About the 20th of May Neptune, Saturn, Jupiter and Venus were all within a zone about thirty degrees wide on one side of the sun, with Mercury and Uranus diametrically opposite on the other side of the sun, and the earth and Mars opposite to each other and at right angles to this combination of six planets.

Accordingly, there should have been at that time a cataclysm almost as severe as the one that is scheduled for December 17, since six planets were nearly in line and the earth was nearly at right angles to the combination (as it is to be on December 17), and therefore "in perfect position to receive the full force of the monster electrical disturbance."

There was a large sun-spot visible in May (also in June), and an electrical storm

90 degrees—in perfect position to receive almost the full force of the monster electrical disturbance as it leaps into activity on what, to us, will be the eastern horizon of the sun's disc.

Be warned in advance. Tremendous things are going to happen from December 17 to 20, 1919, and afterward!

THE END OF THE WORLD—By Francis Danby.

"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."—Revelations vi., 13.

on the earth, but there have been other sun-spots fully as large, and electrical storms fully as great in other years when no two planets were in conjunction.

On August 1 of this year Mercury, Venus and the earth were in less than thirty degrees of each other on one side of the sun, with Mars, Jupiter and Neptune on the opposite side; again, six planets nearly in line and nothing unusual occurred in the way of sun-spots and magnetic storms, although, according to the theory on which the prediction for December 17 is based, even four planets nearly in line will produce "a very great storm, indeed."

The planets, with the exception of Mercury and Venus, change their relative positions very slowly. Especially is this true of the largest and most powerful planets—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. The nearest and most rapidly moving of the four, Jupiter, changes its position only thirty degrees in the course of an entire year. Saturn moves but twelve degrees in a year, Uranus about four degrees and Neptune only two and a fraction.

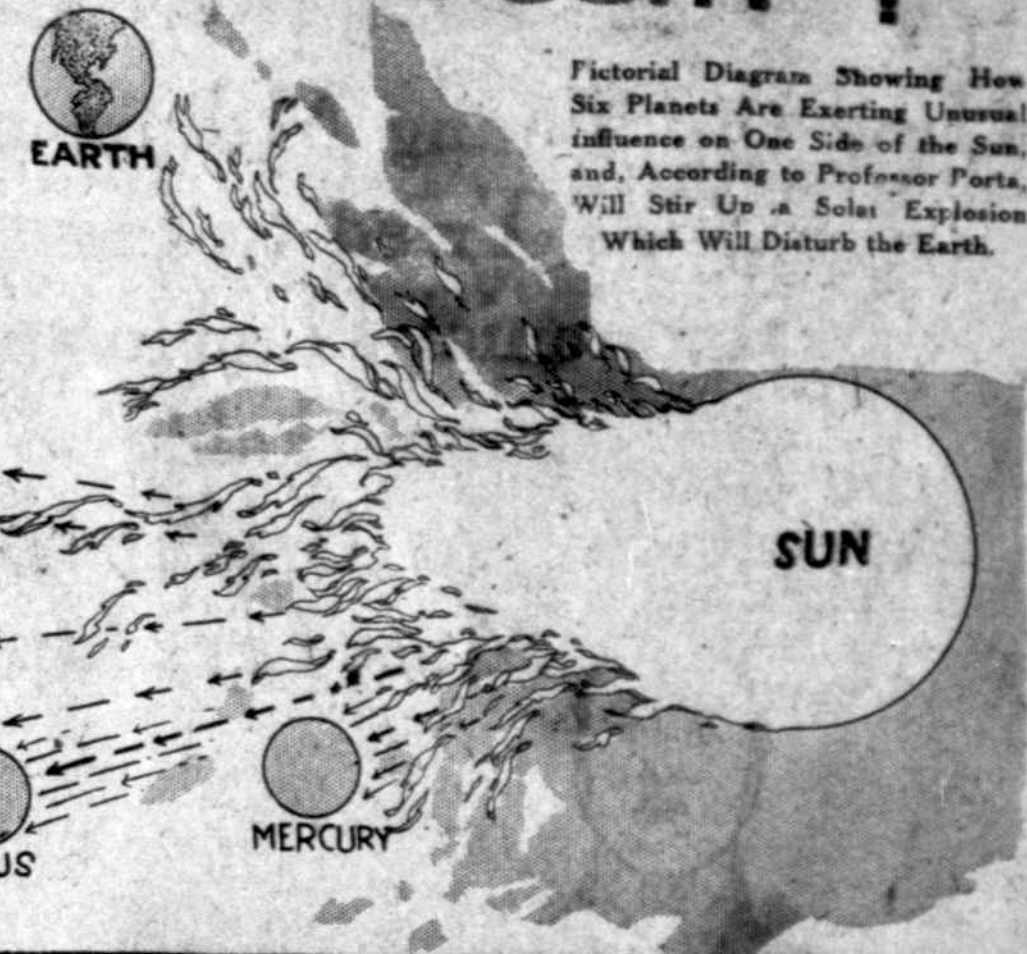
So if these four mightiest planets are in line with each other in December, they are also nearly in line for several months preceding and following this time, and no great and sudden effect could be produced by the changes in their relative positions during this period. The "electro-magnetic pull" of these four planets, Neptune, Uranus, Saturn and Jupiter, upon the sun will be no greater on December 17 than it was in September and October.

It is the comparatively small inner planets that change their positions most rapidly, relative to each other and the other planets. Mercury darts completely around the sun in eighty-eight days, and Venus makes a revolution in seven and a half months. Our own planet, Earth, moves about a degree in a day.

Reference to the diagram will show that these rapidly moving planets have been closely in line with three or more of the planets several different times during the present year. So if the combined electro-magnetic forces of three or four planets closely grouped are supposed to produce solar and terrestrial storms of great intensity, why have not such abnormal storms occurred a number of times this year, particularly in May and August, when six planets were in line?

There are, it is true, electro-magnetic effects produced by the sun upon the planets. Violent solar disturbances in the form of sun-spots and eruptive prominences produce electrical effects upon the earth and in its atmosphere, such as violent magnetic storms, auroral displays, changes in atmospheric currents, cloudiness and rainfall, but it is by no means certain that the planets produce any important electro-magnetic effects upon the sun.

Sun-spots have been carefully studied for many years with a view to discovering such relationships if they exist—and many attempts have been made to determine the cause and nature of their periodicity, with no definite results, though, if anything, the evidence is in favor of an internal rather than an external cause. It is more likely that conditions existing within the sun's interior produce these periodic outbursts of solar activity, and all attendant solar and ter-



Fictorial Diagram Showing How Six Planets Are Exerting Unusual Influence on One Side of the Sun, and, According to Professor Porta, Will Stir Up a Solar Explosion Which Will Disturb the Earth.

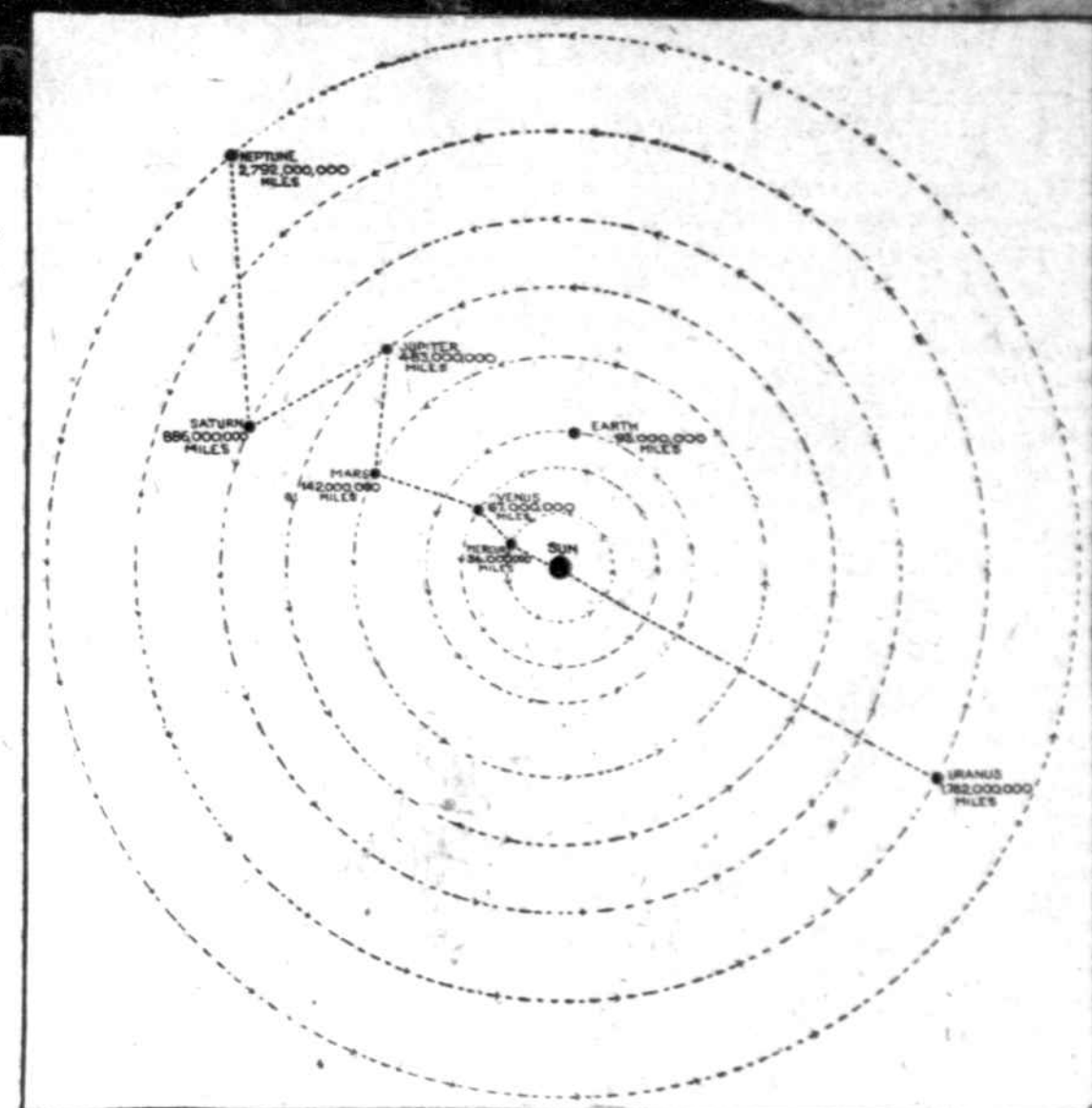
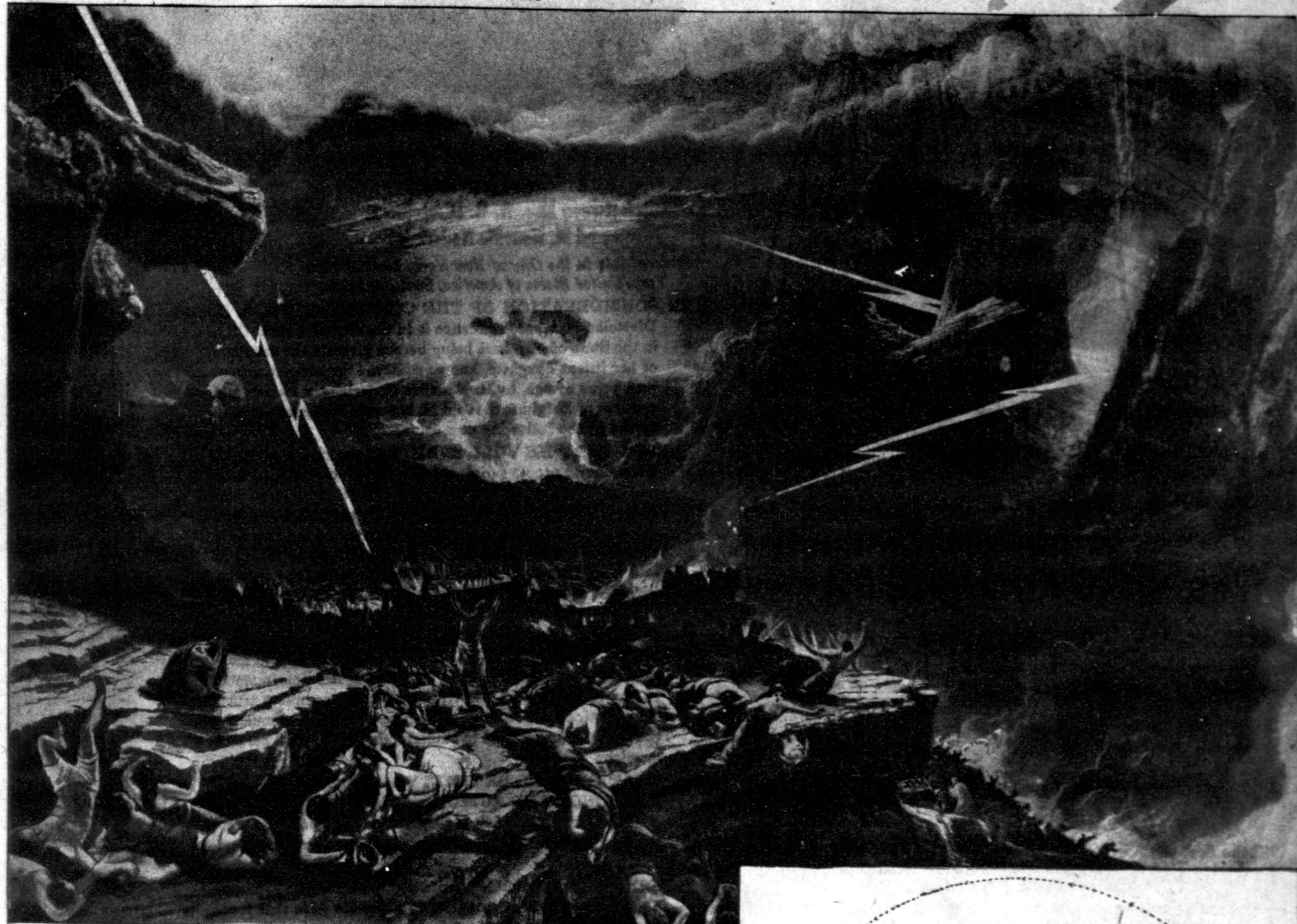


Diagram Showing Positions of the Various Planets on Dec. 17.

restrial displays, than that they are due to the action of the planets.

If electro-magnetic effects were produced by the planets they would not occur with startling suddenness, but would be more or less periodic in their nature and in keeping with the sun-spot cycle of maximum and minimum appearance.

The period when sun spots were most prevalent for this particular cycle occurred two years ago, when solar outbursts were more pronounced and magnetic storms more prevalent than they have been during the past year.

Since solar storms are now decreasing

in number and intensity no unusual disturbance in the atmosphere of the sun or upon the earth's surface is to be expected in the near future.

We may be reasonably assured, then, that no sudden cataclysm will arise as a result of the relative groupings of the planets either on or following December 17.

Many times in the past six and even seven planets have been closely in line without any disastrous results, and there is no reason to believe that the December grouping of the planets will be in any way remarkable.